

STATINTL

# Attempt to Kill Hassan Spotlights Morocco's Links With West

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By Jim Hoagland

Washington Post Foreign Service

RABAT, Aug. 23—The short, handsome man in front of the cameras might well have been a member of Europe's social elite caught up in a minor but newsworthy scandal.

Dressed in an expensive English-cut, dark-blue suit, and speaking flawless

## News Analysis

French, he fended off questions from French journalists, singling them out by name and chiding them for past articles.

The embattled figure was in fact Morocco's Hassan II, an Arab king, the last important monarch on the African continent, inheritor of the 1,100-year-old Alaouite dynasty throne that came close to being toppled last week.

The king met newsmen Monday night in a cylindrical white palace surrounded by Arabic arches and splashing fountains. Preceded by sword-carrying guards, singing hymns of praise to Allah, Hassan quickly made it clear that his Morocco looks West, not to the Arab or African worlds.

While speaking disdainfully of Arab leaders and organizations, the king held up the United States and

France as models of civilized behavior. To illustrate points, he used American golfing terms, French song titles and a reference to the Sharon Tate murders.

The remarks would have seemed strangely disconnected from reality if they had come from another leader of the Third World, but the imprint of the West is strong not only on Morocco's youthful monarch but also on its cities, its educated elite and its armed forces, which look toward Paris and Washington instead of Cairo.

Hassan's survival of last week's airborne assassination attempt has brought into sharp focus the important French, American, and British interests that converge in this country, which the king proudly noted "guards the Mediterranean."

Whether it will affect these interests is still not clear, but it has certainly made the heavy foreign involvement in Morocco subject No. 1 for Rabat's rumor mills this week.

A summary of the events of the past week reads like a contrived script designed to disclose mutual dependencies that Hassan and the West have encouraged:

As Hassan returns from a vacation in France—which still exercises a strong economic and cultural hold on its ex-protectorate 16 years after independence—his

American jetliner is strafed by three jet fighters supplied to Morocco by the United States under a \$15 million-a-year military assistance program.

A French bodyguard is wounded in the attack. Two of the plotters flee to Gibraltar, but are hustled back by the British, who apparently cooperate with the Moroccans in interrogating the two rebel pilots.

Until now, Hassan's close and sometimes secret ties to the West have stirred no important controversy in the country. Like the king, many of his educated subjects seem to regard the firm links to France and the United States favorably, especially since both have provided huge amounts of aid to Morocco.

Such aid is "basically politically motivated," says a senior American official here, "to help maintain a favorable position with an important government that, unlike so many other countries in this area, is not inward-looking and neurotic."

Even opposition political parties, which bitterly criticize every aspect of the king's domestic policies, tread softly on the potentially emotional issue of neo-colonialism.

"We are too strategically located to be able to make enemies," an opposition leader said when asked if he would radically change the

king's foreign policy. "We must protect ourselves by remaining friends with everyone."

For their part, the Big Three Western powers seem to feel that Morocco is too vital for them to engage in a pitched rivalry for influence. The traces of competition and mutual undercutting seem to be slight in comparison to other areas where Americans have attempted to replace a faltering French position, such as Lebanon, parts of French-speaking Africa and, at one time, Vietnam.

The impact of 44 years of French rule on this temperate country, which is a mixture of golden sunshine, snow-peaked mountains and arid plains dotted with orange groves, is immediately visible.

In most Arab countries, Sunday is a work day and Friday the Moslem holy day of rest. Here, although the population is 98 per cent Moslem, government offices and stores observe the Christian Sabbath.

Educated city-dwellers speak fluent French, follow Paris fashions avidly and begin the morning with croissant and cafe au lait. The "European" parts of Morocco's towns are dotted with small French hotels and restaurants, and resemble urban areas in France's Midi.

While there is some re-

Continued

14 SEP 1972

# U.S. Maintains Close Ties With Morocco

BY WILLIAM J. COUGHLIN  
Times Staff Writer

**RABAT, Morocco** — Foreign correspondents have spent a great deal of time shuttling between the kingdom of Jordan and the kingdom of Morocco in recent years, covering attempts to assassinate or overthrow two of the last three kings in the Arab world.

King Hussein of Jordan weathered the 1970-71 effort by the Palestinian guerrillas to overthrow his regime.

Now, King Hassan II of Morocco has escaped the second attempt on his life within little more than a year. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia thus far has appeared immune to such mundane problems.

## Close U.S. Ties

An interesting aspect of all this is the close American relationship with all three monarchies. The bond between the United States and Saudi Arabia obviously is an economic one based on oil and the fortunes of Aramco, largest American oil company in the Middle East which maintains close ties to King Faisal.

King Hussein of Jordan has relied heavily on U.S. financial aid to balance his budget since the ouster of the Fedayeen cost him his subsidy from both Libya and Kuwait.

But it is here in Morocco, which fronts not only on the Mediterranean but on the Atlantic, that the U.S. presence in the Arab world has unusual side-lights.

## Strategic Airfield

There is a good-sized American military mission still in Morocco, although nothing to compare with the 7,500

men who were here when the Strategic Air Command built such huge bases as Nouasseur, which was then one of the largest airfields in the world and whose construction alone cost \$115 million.

Those base agreements were made with the French when Paris ruled much of Morocco and the bases flew the French tricolor, just as the bases used by the U.S. Air Force today in Thailand nominally are Thai bases and under command of the Thai air force.

Morocco does not have the strategic importance today it had then nor would such a U.S. military establishment seem appropriate in a country which gained its independence from France and Spain 16 years ago.

But there are about 700 U.S. military, including dependents, on the Moroccan air base at Kenitra, from which Moroccan air force American-built Northrop F-5s took off Aug. 16 in the attempt to assassinate King Hassan by shooting down his Boeing airliner.

This fact quickly led to charges from elsewhere in the Arab world that the Americans, and in particular the CIA, were involved in the effort to get rid of Hassan, although no convincing reasons were advanced as to why they should be.

## Afternoon Off

The charges were countered by a report from U.S. sources that the Americans could not have been involved because none of them was on the base at the time. This seemed almost as suspicious as if it had been acknowledged that the CIA had been involved. Why, otherwise, would all 700 Americans have bolted the base unless they had advance knowledge of the coup attempt?

According to a later embassy story, what had happened was that the Moroccan air commander had asked those Americans working on the operational part of the base as on

area, to leave their posts about 2:30 p.m., more than an hour before the planes attempted to shoot down the king as his airliner approached the Mediterranean coast on a flight from Paris. This was not an unusual request since it

had previously been made, on occasions when foreign dignitaries such as Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny were arriving at the base by air.

Only after U.S. residents saw and heard of the strafing of the Rabat airport and the abortive attempt to shoot down the king's Boeing did they learn why they got an afternoon off.

There are another 600 or so Americans operating a communications facility for the 6th Fleet and for Polaris missile submarines at Side Yahia, bringing the U.S. military total here to about 1,300.

The U.S. air bases themselves were withdrawn in 1963 by mutual agreement.

There is a military aid program of about \$15 million a year, administered by the Moroccan-U.S. Liaison Office, known of course as MUSLO.

Total U.S. assistance to Morocco under an aid program which began in 1957 totaled \$728 million through fiscal 1971. Major emphasis in the program has been on agriculture, with AID providing agricultural sector loans to the government at a rate as high as \$10 million annually.

## Wheat, Oil, Cotton

The United States also has been providing large quantities of wheat, vegetable oils and cotton under the Public Law 480 program.

Royal Air Maroc, the national airline, has purchased two Boeing 727 aircraft and has announced its intention of buying five more, with one of these already ordered for delivery in 1973.

The Moroccan government is also seeking more

joint ventures for exploration for minerals and oil. Three U.S. oil firms are currently exploring off the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

American hotel interests here include Ramada Inns and Holiday Inn, which currently is engaged in a slight squabble with the government over just how lucrative its contract should be.

Pan American has enough flights in and out of Casablanca, just seven hours from New York, so that the crew Hotel Samir at nearby Mohammedia sometimes sounds more like an American sorority house than a Moroccan hostelry.

There also are about 130 Peace Corps members in Morocco and a staff of some 65 for the American Embassy, U.S. Information Service and AID.

## U.S. Treaty in 1787

U.S. relations with Morocco date back to 1787 when the two nations negotiated a treaty of peace and friendship which now is the longest unbroken treaty relationship in U.S. history. A letter from President George Washington to the Sultan of Morocco adorns a wall of the U.S. embassy here.

The American Consulate at Tangier is the oldest U.S. diplomatic post in the world.

With all of this going, one certainly would have difficulty finding reasons for the CIA to try to break it up.

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# There are no animals in Marrakech

STATINTL

How a would-be African trader  
left Chicago on the road  
to riches and wound up at a  
dead-end in old Morocco.

BY FRANKLIN DUNLAP

I WAS reading Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" when I came upon the line where Uncle Ben says, "Why, boys, when I was 17 I walked into the jungle and when I was 21 I walked out, and by God I was rich!" Unfortunately, I stopped reading right there and went to see Greg, who worked in the pet shop. Between us, we pooled \$500. Then along came Jonathan, a young writer. "Wow," said Jonathan, "will you guys cut me in? I have \$200 I would like to invest!" His faith was so disarming it deserve

It would work this way: I would buy only a one-way ticket to Tangier, Morocco. I would have \$200 to live on and \$200 to buy animals. Greg and Jonathan would sell my first shipment at 100 per cent markup and return \$400 proceeds within one month. In 12 months, as anyone could cleverly see, we would have over \$400,000 capital by doubling our money every month.

We called our little venture Noah, and ordered a box of attractive beige business cards with a lion's footprint in the corner. The cards read: *Collectors, Continental Africa*. With these stuffing my pockets, I boarded the plane at O'Hare. "You are really going to Africa," my wife said looking at me with big eyes. "We will

the ponies run at Longchamps in Paris in the summer." She looked back blankly. "Beware the eyeball viper," warned Greg in parting. "Why, boys," I said, waving my new corduroy cap, bought to protect my business brain from the African sun, "when I was 17 I walked into the jungle and when I was 21 . . ."

"Goodby, goodby," they said.

We did not intend to ship white rhinoceroses by the pair at \$12,630 right off. In fact, our intentions to start were suitably modest: Morocco was the most accessible of African countries [from our simple-minded geographical perspective], and we would begin there, shipping what they had.

They had precious little. They had

WASHINGTON OBSERVER

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**GENERAL C.I.A.** While the Central Intelligence Agency has suffered, during these last few years, many setbacks and even fiascos by using inadequate personnel in Latin America, it has just scored heavily in Morocco, thanks to a veteran of the service, General Mohammed Oufkir, the minister of the interior of Hassan II.

Hassan, who like his father, Sultan Mohammed V, is heavily backed by the U.S., survived an attempted palace revolution of the kind that recently toppled British-backed King Idriss of Libya. The attempted coup was foiled by Oufkir, whose connection with the unvouchered funds dates back to World War II and the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), which preceded the CIA as America's cloak-and-dagger agency.

Oufkir, who is not an Arab, but a tall, raw-boned and straight-nosed Berber from the Atlas Mountains, was one of the extremely rare native officers serving in the Tirailleurs Marocains back in 1942, when he was first approached on behalf of the O.S.S. President Roosevelt was preparing the invasion of French North Africa and a flock of U.S. "relief workers" had descended on French Morocco, making contacts. They recruited General Bethouart, Oufkir's superior, to help with the scheduled landing of U.S. forces at Casablanca and Oufkir went along with the deal.

On the eve of the landings, however, the French Navy, which had remained loyal to Marshal Pétain, arrested Bethouart and his principal henchmen, including Oufkir.

In 1954, when the Eisenhower Administration leased bases in Spain for the U.S. forces and obtained from General Franco the permission to use Spanish Morocco to organize guerilla raids into French Morocco, Oufkir, who had returned from a stint in Indochina, where he had served in the French forces, appeared in Spanish Morocco, where the C.I.A. directed operations against the French. He has stayed on the C.I.A. payroll ever since, his main assignment being to guard the Moroccan monarch against the many conspiracies and plots which sprout in the Arab world like patches of hashish after a rainstorm.

Now Oufkir, by helping to thwart the attempted coupe by the "extremist," pro-Palestinian guerillas faction, has proven his value to the Zionist CIA.

25 JUL 1971

STATINTL

Morocco:

## Where Corruption Is a Way Of Life

RABAT--The best table in Morocco is unquestionably the one set by King Hassan II for distinguished guests. But a certain ambiguity hovered over the luncheon that was served yesterday to Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

It was not solely that the King's best chef was among the hundred or so persons who were shot to death by rebels at another luncheon given just two weeks ago at the summer palace in nearby Skhirat. Some of the ambiguity concerned the guest of honor himself, as representative of the United States Government.

That Government now finds itself not only criticized at home for being overly friendly to the Hassan regime, but also accused in Morocco of having incited the plot to overthrow the King.

Americans in contact with Moroccans here are frequently the target of more or less guarded questions about a possible link between the Central Intelligence Agency and the military conspirators. One minor official was more forthright. "Certainly, it was a C.I.A. job," he said angrily. "General Medbouh was their man. Didn't he go to Washington eight times? Didn't he take their complaint about Pan American to the King?"

Gen. Mohammed Medbouh, named by the King as the principal plotter, did in fact--after a trip to Washington last April--convey a protest from Pan American World Airways that it was being shaken down for \$7-million in connection with a hotel project in Casablanca. It developed that the racket was far bigger. The "fixer," who said he was acting for the King, was jailed for a time, and a number of officials, including four Ministers, were dismissed.

A diplomat acknowledged wearily that talk of a C.I.A. role in the Skhirat incident was rife, but he called the whole thing "absurd." He pointed to Morocco's location as the gateway to the Mediterranean, and implied that United States policy here would be no different from that in Spain and Greece. There, for "strategic" reasons, the United States aids other authoritarian rightist regimes.

How secure is this one is another question. The fact that the Agnew visit was cut from two days to one because of security problems appeared to contradict King Hassan's contention that his regime had emerged from the Skhirat putsch stronger than before.

Nothing transpired last week to shed further light on the motives or tactics of the rebels. But a consensus of the informed Moroccans with whom this reporter has talked is that at least a majority of the officers involved were eager to purge the country of "corruption and debauchery," to quote a phrase common among critics of the regime.

A striking phenomenon has been the apparent passivity of the public. A week-long tour of the political capital of Rabat, the southern capital of Marrakesh and the economic capital of Casablanca demonstrated why.

Morocco is a beautiful country. It is well endowed by nature with rich plains, snow-capped mountains that shed a decent amount of water, large deposits of phosphates, some coal, iron and other minerals and enormous possibilities for tourism--hundreds of miles of beaches, ski slopes galore, fascinating folklore and some good French roads.

These resources are being developed, but hardly any faster than the growth rate of the population: 3.3 per cent a year. The average per capita income is estimated at less than \$190 a year, a figure that conceals a catastrophic inequality in the distribution of wealth.

Foreign observers estimate urban unemployment at up to 25 per cent. The lack of jobs discourages parents from making the sacrifice needed to send children to school, and illiteracy is put at 20 per cent.

With Government salaries low--there has been one general wage increase of 15 per cent since Morocco became independent in 1956--corruption is described as commonplace. A businessman favorable to the regime, but fearful about its stability, said that a civil-service applicant had to kick back one-third of his pay and that this sort of graft prevailed through all levels of business and Government.

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy on paper, but the two big opposition parties are not represented in Parliament; they boycotted the referendum and elections last year because they held that the new constitution made the Parliament a rubber stamp.

The two parties are the Nationalist Istiqlal and the left-nationalist Union Nationale des Forces Populaires, both of which were active in resistance to the French protectorate and which obtained the return of Mohammed V, father of King Hassan, to the throne. Both have led the Government in the past.

The Istiqlal is permitted to publish two daily newspapers, one in Arabic and the other in French, but one of its editors was imprisoned recently and the papers limit their criticism to such things as hospital conditions. The corruption scandal of last April was not published here.

The U.N.F.P., which leads the nation's largest labor federation, has been crippled by the arrest or exile of many of its militant cadres, 193 of whom are on trial for their lives in Marrakesh. They are accused of plotting against the regime.

Some observers friendly to King Hassan feel that he should now turn to the opposition for support. "There is a feeling here that he's got to change," one of them said. But he was not optimistic.

--JOHN L. HESS